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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2009

Media Highlights: Iran's Nuclear Program; Economic Cooperation
Decision at the OIC; Sudan;
Turmoil in the Balkans

Gul and Ahmedinejad Discuss Iran's Nuclear Program
Although initial Iranian wire service reports said that Tehran had rejected the offer, Turkish media today are reporting that FM Davutoglu said the prospects were positive. "We have taken up the issue both during the visit of our prime minister in October and meetings held on Sunday," Davutoglu told reporters on Monday. "We are in a very constructive position with both the IAEA and Iran." Haberturk newspaper says that ElBaradei's proposal was discussed by Gul and Ahmadinejad at the OIC conference. After the meeting of the two presidents, debates between FM Davutoglu and his Iranian counterpart Manouchehr Mottaki continued till midnight, the paper adds. Haberturk also reports that before leaving Turkey yesterday, Ahmadinejad told reporters he hadn't rejected the offer. According to Sabah, however, the Iranian leader asked for guarantees. Mainstream Milliyet says that Iran has 1200 kg of uranium and that Turkey has offered to take 900 kg of this amount. Sabah says Iran did not reject the proposal but demanded guarantees saying Turkey has submitted the Iranian demands to the international community.

Islamic World Agrees on Economic Cooperation at the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)
Today's papers highlight the news that the Islamic World for the first time in many years has reached an agreement for economic cooperation. Mainstream Sabah reports that President Gul while delivering the opening speech at the standing committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC) of the OIC said "we have to spread the peaceful message of Islam to the world." Liberal Radikal reports that in his speech Gul referred to concerns of the West and said "Turkey is shifting its course. The EU process that our country is following and its initiatives within the scope of COMCEC are elements of our foreign policy that support each other." Iranian President Ahmedinejad commented that "capitalism has collapsed" while urging OIC members to "unite to make their economies stronger." Syrian President Asad is quoted as saying that "the development of economic ties among Islamic countries would help them deal with international competition." Afghanistan leader Karzai said that Islamic countries have broad economic power and

must set up a partnership. Islamist oriented Yeni Safak drew attention to the peace messages of all the leaders who were attending the summit.

Sudan

Officials are denying bigtime that Turkey pressed Bashir to cancel trip. Islamist-oriented Zaman quotes Sudanese officials as saying that "President Gul did not ask Sudanese President Bashir to cancel his trip to Turkey. The annulment of the trip was related to domestic problems." Zaman then notes that, in contrast to the EU, the US refrained from criticizing Turkey while underlining the importance it attached to any messages to be given to Bashir by the Turkish leadership during the intended visit. In a related story, Hurriyet Daily News reports today that Turkey says it is reconsidering joining the Rome Statute if terrorism is included as a crime under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. Hurriyet and Vatan report that Erdogan's latest comments on the situation are making headlines in Israel. Vatan draws attention to reports that Erdogan said the war crimes committed by Israel were worse than the crimes committed in Sudan. Hurriyet says that this latest gasp is fueling a fresh crisis between Turkey and Israel.

Mainstream Milliyet's senior columnist Sami Kohen welcomes the decision of Sudanese President Al-Bashir not to come to Turkey and says "If Bashir had insisted on coming to Turkey and Turkish government had continued welcoming and defending him, within the framework of global norms, Turkey would be included in a category of countries thinking differently than the majority of international public. If Turkey desires to be considered as part of the Western World, then, it should give a fine tuning to its policies, stance

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and mentality. In short, recent Bashir incident did not do any good to Turkey's image."

Turkey Maneuvers to Prevent New War in the Balkans

Mainstream Aksam gives extensive coverage to a fresh escalation of tensions in Bosnia. The paper notes that the country has come to the verge of war after 14 years of peace and that the Dayton agreement that ended the war in Bosnia 14 years ago is about to collapse. While Europe remains silent on the developments in Serbia, Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu has launched silent diplomacy to reverse the dangerous developments in the Balkans. Aksam notes that Davutoglu was in contact with his Bosnian and Serbian counterparts. Aksam editor Ismail Kucukkaya commented on the issue and said that Ankara was aware of the risks in Bosnia and that is why Turkey is engaged in secret diplomacy in the region.

Dogan Newspaper Sale

Newspapers are reporting that tax-embattled Dogan Group will announce the sale of a section of its holding companies, including four newspapers, to its German partner. Islamic oriented Yeni Safak reports that the company plans to shed ownership in Milliyet, Radikal, business daily Referans, Posta and a soccer newspaper.

Editorial - Commentary on Turkey's Foreign Policies

Mainstream Hurriyet's senior columnist and former Ankara rep, Sedat Ergin in today's commentary quoted extensively from Morton Abromowitz and Henry Barkey's recent "Foreign Affairs" article about Turkey. Examples he selected included Erdogan scolding the Israeli President in Davos, his defense of the Sudanese President and his congratulating Ahmedinejad after the Iranian elections. While using material from the article to show how the AKP government upset positive initiatives, Ergin then distanced himself from the criticism by saying, "please don't misunderstand, these are not my assessments but they belong to Barkey and Abramowitz."

Upcoming events:

Q November 10: Ceremonies will be held around the country to commemorate Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey.

Q November 10: The government plans to debate the "Democratic Initiative" in the parliament.

Q November 11-12: Afghanistan Reconstruction Summit will be held in Istanbul.

TV News (NTV)

Domestic

Q The Health Ministry said three more people have died in the swine flu outbreak, and the death toll climbed to 30

Q Opposition CHP wants to postpone the debate in the parliament today on the government's Kurdish "Democratic Initiative."

Q Justice Minister Sadullah Ergin said a new regulation concerning children throwing stones at the security forces would be sent to the parliament soon.

Q The number of Israeli tourists coming to Turkey decreased by 44.62 percent in the first ten months of the year following the angry debate of PM Erdogan with President Peres in Davos.

World

Q President Obama will begin a four-nation tour of Asia on Wednesday.

Q Lebanon's Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri has formed a new unity government that includes two ministers from Syrian and Iranian-backed Hezbollah.

Q Celebrations are held to mark the 20th year anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain.

JEFFREY